



STATE OF ILLINOIS
327 STATE CAPITOL
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62706
217-782-2728

Dear Gov. Pritzker,

Our local small businesses and the people they employ are the backbone of our communities. However, many of these businesses are facing a financial crush during this time. Owners and employees are left worrying about the long-term impact from this coronavirus outbreak. While we agree that following the science during this pandemic is critical, it cannot go unnoticed that businesses and workers across our state are becoming frustrated as the definition of essential and non-essential blurs.

We recognize the need to remain vigilant against this disease and the continued pressure put on our first responders and health care professionals. However, under your leadership, the state has made great strides to dramatically expand testing and medical capacity in recent months. It is now time to recognize that our economic needs require more attention. Too many of our small business owners and their employees are frustrated at what appear to them to be arbitrary decisions regarding which services can and cannot be open, who can and cannot work.

While we understand many businesses may simply not be able to be open at this time because of the nature of their services, there are small businesses throughout our communities that can easily and eagerly function within specific guidelines already laid out by your administration. Workers are anxious to get back to their jobs, follow those guidelines and do their part to responsibly rekindle our economy.

We implore you to give our local municipalities and health departments a more active voice in this process. Keeping safety in mind, it is time we give our small businesses the opportunity to adhere to the specific guidelines the administration already imposed on businesses that are open. Most of our smaller businesses never see the crowds of customers experienced at big box retailers. As such, it is increasingly difficult to understand why one business is required to be closed while the other is open. A more consistent approach will go a long way in reassuring our small businesses and their workers that they are valued parts of this state's economic future, too.

Here's the proposal we would like you to consider: Working with local officials, a business must demonstrate its ability to enforce the face covering requirement for all employees and customers; adhere to the 6-foot social distancing guidelines per patron based on the square footage of the storefront or building; and ensure a thorough cleaning regimen with approved sanitizers and disinfectants.

We recognize there are still businesses that may not be able to operate within these parameters, but again, this approach allows some of our small businesses a fighting chance to restore economic viability for themselves, their employees and their communities. And, most importantly, this proposal would allow local leaders and health departments to utilize their knowledge and expertise in giving local input based on the state guidelines that have been issued.



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We are fortunate to have mayors, public safety experts and health officials managing our communities in good faith. Like you, they prioritize the health of their citizens and are following the guidelines assembled by health professionals and scientists. Our request to you is for the state to trust these local officials to continue to make decisions. We encourage you to modify the existing statewide order to recognize local expertise and incorporate local decision making until the existing order is revisited at the end of May.

Sincerely,

Sen. Christopher Belt

Sen. Scott Bennett

Sen. Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant

Sen. Melinda Bush

Sen. Rachele Crowe

Sen. Tom Cullerton

Sen. Napoleon Harris III

Sen. Suzy Glowiak Hilton

Sen. Linda Holmes

Sen. Patrick Joyce

Sen. Dave Koehler

Sen. Pat McGuire

Sen. Elgie R. Sims Jr.

Sen. Steve Stadelman